



Fish

Chapter 1

Protecting, improving and managing Wisconsin's fisheries resources and aquatic habitats for the benefit of all the state's citizens.

The Fish and Wildlife Account pays \$23 million or 75 percent of the \$30.7 million fisheries management, research, and habitat protection programs, and 272 of the fisheries program's 346 positions.

The remaining 74 positions and \$7.7 million are provided through general tax funds, federal funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, water regulation permits and other fees and federal grants.

How does the Fisheries program use your money?

(in millions of dollars)

Evaluate fish populations and conduct research	8.5
Rear and stock fish	5.5
Protect and improve habitat	3.2
Inform and educate the public	0.5
Develop rules and regulations	0.2
Pay program operations costs	5.1
Total	\$23

How is fisheries work funded?

Funding Source	\$ (in millions)	%
Fish and Wildlife Fund		
License Fees	14.5	47
Sturgeon license	0.1	<1
Salmon Stamp	1.1	4
Trout Stamp	1.4	5
Sport Fish Restoration	4.7	15
Misc. grants and donations	1.2	4
Subtotal - Fish and Wildlife Account	23.0	75
Rest of the Conservation Fund	2.0	6
General taxes (GPR)	5.7	19
Total	30.7	100

What did the Fisheries program accomplish for you in 2003–2004?

Conducted scientifically-based fisheries management work.

We monitored fish populations and angler and commercial harvest, set and evaluated harvest regulations and stocking quotas, planned and implemented habitat restoration and improvement projects, and reviewed stocking, fish farm and water regulation permits. We also conducted educational and cooperative activities with the public, and sampled fish populations

and habitat quality in 2003-2004 on 769 stream sites and 403 lakes.

Maintained a network of fish biologists and technicians across the state.

We maintain 272 fisheries management positions throughout the state. Ninety-three 93 percent are field positions in local offices or hatcheries where staff work directly with area anglers, groups and communities to improve fishing opportunities across Wisconsin.

Improved trout stream habitat.

Using dedicated funds from inland trout stamp revenues supplemented by regular operating funds, in 2003-04, fisheries staff, often working with partner groups, improved 28 miles of trout habitat, bringing to more than 650 the stream miles improved since the program began in 1979. Each year the \$1.1 million raised by the sale of trout stamps and patron licenses is spent to restore and improve 25 to 30 miles of degraded trout streams.

Raised and stocked 10,966,158 fish, and produced 20 million fry for stocking.

We operated 13 state fish hatcheries and rearing stations, three egg collection weirs, and 10 to 15 fish production ponds. We annually produce up to 7.6 million trout and salmon fingerlings and yearlings, up to 5 million musky, walleye, bass, pike and sturgeon fingerlings, and up to 50 million fry for stocking in about 15 percent of state waters.

Assured sustainable walleye populations while accommodating sport fish harvest and court-mandated tribal treaty fishing rights.

In the 30 northern counties the Chippewa ceded to the U.S. government in 1854, we implemented federally-required monitoring of walleye and musky fish populations, and state and tribal harvest in the ceded territory's 860 walleye and 665 musky lakes. Comprehensive monitoring ensures that fish populations are not overharvested and remain healthy.

Monitored Great Lakes sport and commercial fish populations and harvest.

Fisheries staff working in Lake Michigan and Lake Superior operate three large vessels, set harvest quotas and regulations, set and evaluate stocking quotas, and cooperate with other states and provinces. Sales of the Great Lakes Salmon and Trout stamp provide funds for fish stocking, which is needed to maintain salmon and trout fisheries.

Protect critical habitat and provide fishing access; maintain boat launches and shore-fishing piers

Over the years, we've acquired almost 120,000 acres of fishery lands and stream easements. In 2003-2004, we worked with DNR lands staff to acquire 1,102 acres at \$2,914,981 for state public fishery areas.

Sampled fish populations for mercury, PCBs and other potentially harmful contaminants.

We have documented that the vast majority of waters in Wisconsin have large populations of fish that are very healthy to eat on a regular basis. Each year we publish a fish health advisory for sport caught fish which identifies those waters or species and sizes of fish for which anglers should avoid or limit their fish consumption. In 2003-2004, we sampled fish from 79 locations in 55 waters.

Trained a network of volunteer aquatic education instructors and sponsored clinics.

Today's children are tomorrow's anglers and stewards of our aquatic resources. In 2003-2004, we provided workshops that trained 160 people who introduced more than 6,000 children to fishing and aquatic resources. Fisheries staff also sponsored kids fishing clinics and education classes.

Made sure you had the latest information on fish, aquatic resources, fishing opportunities, and DNR programs.

We did this by maintaining a comprehensive Web pages on the DNR Web site at www.fishingwisconsin.org, which has links to recent news releases, staff directories, searchable fish stocking, fish population and creel survey databases, places to go fishing, lands and access directories, the latest fishing information, and DNR publications and reports. We also published regulation summaries, informational brochures, maps and educational materials and a spring Fishing Forecast newspaper.

Budget reductions in 2003-2004

Here are actions the DNR fisheries program took to reduce operations costs, and to carry out budget reductions required in the 2003-05 State Biennial Budget:

Fewer field staff: 27 field biologist and technician positions remained unfilled to save money in 2003-04; eight of these positions were cut in 2004-05. Less fisheries work occurred in some locations as a result.

Less field work: Fewer fishery surveys were done on inland lakes and streams, warm water habitat projects were reduced 50 percent, and trout habitat work was reduced 20 percent. No new fishing piers were developed.

Fish stocking reduced: The Langlade Fish Hatchery was closed. Musky and northern pike stocking was reduced, walleye stocking in lakes with natural reproduction was eliminated, and stocking of lower-return trout strains in the Great Lakes was cut.

Where are we going in 2004-2005?

If hunting and fishing license fees are increased as proposed in Governor Jim Doyle's 2005-07 State Biennial Budget, we will fill 12 of the 20 total vacant fish biologist and technician positions. The remaining eight positions have already been eliminated to meet previous budget reductions.

Conduct scientifically-based fisheries management work. We will continue assessing lake and stream health by monitoring fish communities and aquatic habitat, and carrying out other management activities.

Raise and stock fish. Costs for fish food, transportation, and rock used to rebuild fish habitat continue to climb. Engineering and design plans will be drawn to renovate the aging Wild Rose Fish Hatchery. If funding shortages remain an issue, we will prepare to close one to two additional fish production facilities and further reduce inland trout, Great Lakes trout, musky and walleye stocking.

